

CHAPTER VI.

Some Account of John Smith. His Birth, School-days, and early Character. Death of his Father, and the Consequences of that Event. He travels into France, Flanders, and other Countries. Returns Home. Commences his Travels again. A Series of wonderful Adventures.

JOHN SMITH was born at Willoughby, in Lincolnshire, England, in the year 1579. From the earliest period, when he discovered the first traits of his character, it appeared to be in the highest degree romantic and enterprising. He began, in his childhood, with practising such queer pranks among his young comrades at school, as absolutely amazed them; and very likely the good schoolmaster too. Nothing was too extravagant for his daring genius.

But he soon grew weary of a confined life, and was wild enough to sell his books and his satchel, and childish play-things of various descriptions, for the purpose of raising money for conveying himself privately to the sea-side. The death of his father, however, put a stop, for the present, to this enterprise, by committing him to the strict charge of guardians. The latter were determined to keep a sharp eye upon him; and they began by putting him out to service in a counting-house, expecting, no doubt, that hard labor and good advice would soon reduce him down to a tolerably tame boy.

But they happened to make the grievous mistake,